



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/266,253	03/11/1999	HAYATO UJIE	1232-4522	5541

7590 03/24/2004

MORGAN & FINNEGAN
345 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10154

EXAMINER

WU, DOROTHY

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2615	12

DATE MAILED: 03/24/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/266,253

Applicant(s)

UJIE ET AL.

Examiner

Dorothy Wu

Art Unit

2615

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-35, 50 and 51 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-35, 50 and 51 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-35, 50, and 51 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-3, 15-22, 33-35, 50-51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito et al, U.S. Patent 6,256,063, in view of Kobayashi et al, U.S. Patent 5,136,320.

Regarding claim 1, Saito et al teaches an image sensing apparatus (camera 10) that judges at least whether said image sensing apparatus is connected to an external device (host computer 30) through a memory card such that the operations of the image sensing apparatus, including image capture, are controlled by the external device (host computer 30), which reads on an external control state in which said apparatus is controlled by an external controller unit (col. 9, line 47-col. 10, line 3). The determination device is inherently taught. Saito also teaches that the image sensing apparatus can capture images when its shutter release button is pressed, which reads on an image sensing state in which said apparatus is controlled independent of the external

Art Unit: 2615

controller unit, individually (col. 9, lines 4-7). Saito therefore teaches that operations of the camera may be controlled individually or by an external device, which reads on determination of operations of the image sensing apparatus in accordance with whether the image sensing apparatus is controlled by an external device. Saito does not teach a driving device that moves an image sensing optical system to image sensing and non image sensing regions. Kobayashi teaches a driving device (zoom motor **10**) that moves an image sensing optical system (zoom lens **11**) to image sensing and non image sensing regions (col. 9, lines 13-18, 43-49). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the driving device of Kobayashi into the image sensing apparatus that may be controlled individually or by an external device taught by Saito to make an image sensing apparatus that drives its optical system in accordance with the desires of its controller, whether the controller is an individual operator or an external unit. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to provide greater flexibility in operating a camera.

Regarding claim 50, because the apparatus of claim 1 is taught, the control method corresponding to the apparatus is also taught.

Regarding claim 2, Saito teaches that when a camera is connected to the computer, which reads on the external control state, the computer sends controls the camera pertaining to image sensing (col. 9, line 47-col. 10, line 3). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to move the optical system to the image sensing region when capturing images.

Regarding claim 3, Saito teaches that the host computer transmits shutter release commands to the camera (col. 9, line 47-col. 10, line 3), which reads on an external control state in which the external controller unit transmits an image sensing signal to the camera. It would

Art Unit: 2615

have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to move the optical system to the image sensing region when capturing images.

Regarding claim 15, Kobayashi et al teaches that the non image sensing region includes a position where said optical system is stored (col. 9, lines 15-18).

Regarding claim 16, Kobayashi et al teaches that the non image sensing region includes a predetermined position where the optical system is collapsed in a body of said image sensing apparatus (col. 9, lines 15-16, and Fig. 3)

Regarding claim 17, Saito teaches that a computer may control the operation of the camera, which reads on an external control state in which an external computer controls the camera (col. 9, line 63-col. 10, line 3).

Regarding claim 18, Kobayashi et al teaches that said driving device includes a motor (zoom motor 10) (col. 9, lines 43-49).

Regarding claim 19, Saito et al teaches a camera that judges at least whether said camera is connected to an external device (host computer 30) through a memory card such that the operations of the image sensing apparatus, including image capture, are controlled by the external device (host computer 30), which reads on an external control state in which said apparatus is controlled by an external controller unit (col. 9, line 47-col. 10, line 3). The determination device is inherently taught. Saito also teaches that the image sensing apparatus can capture images when its shutter release button is pressed, which reads on a photographing state in which said apparatus is controlled independent of the external controller unit, individually (col. 9, lines 4-7). Saito therefore teaches that operations of the camera may be controlled individually or by an external device, which reads on determination of operations of the image

Art Unit: 2615

sensing apparatus in accordance with whether the image sensing apparatus is controlled by an external device. Saito does not teach a driving device that moves a photographing optical system to photographing and non photographing regions. Kobayashi teaches a driving device (zoom motor 10) that moves a photographing optical system (zoom lens 11) to photographing and non photographing regions (col. 9, lines 13-18, 43-49). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the driving device of Kobayashi into the image sensing apparatus that may be controlled individually or by an external device taught by Saito to make an image sensing apparatus that drives its optical system in accordance with the desires of its controller, whether the controller is an individual operator or an external unit. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to provide greater flexibility in operating a camera.

Regarding claim 20, Saito et al teaches an image sensing apparatus (camera 10) that judges at least whether said image sensing apparatus is connected to an external device (host computer 30) through a memory card such that the operations of the image sensing apparatus, including image capture, are controlled by the external device (host computer 30), which reads on an external control state in which said apparatus is controlled by an external controller unit (col. 9, line 47-col. 10, line 3). The determination device is inherently taught. Saito also teaches that the image sensing apparatus can capture images when its shutter release button is pressed, which reads on an image sensing state in which said apparatus is controlled independent of the external controller unit, individually (col. 9, lines 4-7). Saito therefore teaches that operations of the camera may be controlled individually or by an external device, which reads on determination of operations of the image sensing apparatus in accordance with whether the

Art Unit: 2615

image sensing apparatus is controlled by an external device. Saito does not teach a driving device that moves an image sensing optical system in extending and retracting directions. Kobayashi teaches a driving device (zoom motor **10**) that moves an image sensing optical system (zoom lens **11**) in extending and retracting directions (col. 9, lines 43-49). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the driving device of Kobayashi into the image sensing apparatus that may be controlled individually or by an external device taught by Saito to make an image sensing apparatus that drives its optical system in accordance with the desires of its controller, whether the controller is an individual operator or an external unit. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to provide greater flexibility in operating a camera.

Regarding claim 51, because the apparatus of claim 20 is taught, the control method corresponding to the apparatus is also taught.

Regarding claim 21, Saito teaches that when a camera is connected to a computer, which reads on the external control state, the computer controls the camera to effect image sensing (col. 9, line 47-col. 10, line 3). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to extend the image sensing optical system out from the camera body when capturing images.

Regarding claim 22, Saito teaches that the camera receives shutter release commands from the host computer **12**, which reads on an external state in which the external controller unit transmits an image sensing signal to the camera **10** (col. 9, line 47-col. 10, line 3). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to extend image sensing optical system out from the camera body when capturing images.

Regarding claim 33, Saito teaches that a computer may control the camera, which reads on an external control state (col. 9, line 47-col. 10, line 3).

Regarding claim 34, Kobayashi et al teaches that said driving device includes a motor (zoom motor **10**) (col. 9, lines 43-49).

Regarding claim 35, Saito et al teaches a camera that judges at least whether said camera is connected to an external device (host computer 30) through a memory card such that the operations of the image sensing apparatus, including image capture, are controlled by the external device (host computer 30), which reads on an external control state in which said apparatus is controlled by an external controller unit (col. 9, line 47-col. 10, line 3). The determination device is inherently taught. Saito also teaches that the camera can capture images when its shutter release button is pressed, which reads on a photographing state in which said camera is controlled independent of the external controller unit, individually (col. 9, lines 4-7). Saito therefore teaches that operations of the camera may be controlled individually or by an external device, which reads on determination of operations of the image sensing apparatus in accordance with whether the image sensing apparatus is controlled by an external controller unit. Saito does not teach a driving device that moves a photographing optical system in extending and retracting directions. Kobayashi teaches a driving device (zoom motor **10**) that moves a photographing optical system (zoom lens **11**) in extending and retracting directions (col. 9, lines 43-49). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the driving device of Kobayashi into the camera that may be controlled individually or by an external device taught by Saito to make a camera that drives its photographing optical system in accordance with the desires of its controller, whether the

Art Unit: 2615

controller is an individual operator or an external unit. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to provide greater flexibility in operating a camera.

3. Claims 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito et al, U.S. Patent 6,256,063, in view of Kobayashi et al, U.S. Patent 5,136,320, and further in view of Takahashi, U.S. Patent 5,210,567.

Regarding claim 4, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus of claim 3. See above. Saito in view of Kobayashi do not teach the driving of said optical system to the non image sensing region in response to a completion of an image sensing operation. Takahashi teaches the retraction of a lens to a rest position a predetermined time period after an image capture (col. 2, lines 40-52), which reads on the driving of an optical system to a non image sensing region in response to a completion of an image sensing operation. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the apparatus of Saito in view of Kobayashi with the practice of positioning the optical system in the non image sensing region following the completion of an image capture taught by Takahashi to make an apparatus that retracts the lens once image capture has been completed. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to protect the lens when not in use.

Regarding claims 5 and 10, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus of claim 3. See above. Saito in view of Kobayashi do not teach a timer for causing said driving device to drive said image sensing optical system to the non image sensing region a predetermined time period after a completion of an image sensing operation. Takahashi teaches the retraction of a

Art Unit: 2615

lens to a rest position a predetermined time period after an image capture (col. 2, lines 40-52). The timer is inherently taught. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the apparatus of Saito in view of Kobayashi with the technique of Takahashi to make an image sensing apparatus with a timer that retracts the lens to a non image sensing position once a predetermined time period following an image capture has elapsed, whether the apparatus is in the external control state or not. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to protect the lens when not in use.

Regarding claims 6 and 11, Takahashi teaches the retraction of lens to a rest position after the elapse of a predetermined time period following the last image capture (col. 2, lines 40-52). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill that if another image is captured before the predetermined time period elapses, the timer resets in accordance with the most recent image captured, and the lens would remain in the extended position.

Regarding claim 23, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus of claim 22. See above. Saito in view of Kobayashi do not teach the retraction of optical system in response to a completion of an image sensing operation. Takahashi does teach the retraction of a camera lens a predetermined time period after an image capture (col. 2, lines 40-52), which reads on the retraction of the lens in response to a completion of an image sensing operation. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the apparatus of Saito in view of Kobayashi with the practice of retracting the optical system following the completion of an image capture taught by Takahashi to make an apparatus

Art Unit: 2615

that retracts the lens after image capture has been completed. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to protect the lens when not in use.

Regarding claim 24, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus of claim 22. See above. Saito in view of Kobayashi do not teach a timer for causing the retraction of said optical system a predetermined time period after an image capture. Takahashi teaches the retraction of a camera lens a predetermined time period after an image capture (col. 5, lines 23-28). The timer is inherently taught. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the apparatus of Saito in view of Kobayashi with the technique of Takahashi to make an image sensing apparatus that retracts the lens after a predetermined time period following an image capture has elapsed. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to protect the lens when not in use.

Regarding claim 25, Takahashi teaches the retraction of lens to a rest position after the elapse of a predetermined time period following the last image capture (col. 5, lines 23-28). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill that if another image is captured before the predetermined time period elapses, the timer resets in accordance with the most recent image captured, and the lens would remain in the extended position.

Regarding claim 27, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus of claim 20. See above. Saito in view of Kobayashi do not teach the retracting of said optical system in response to a completion of an image sensing operation. Takahashi does teach the retraction of a camera lens a predetermined time period after an image capture (abstract; col. 5, lines 23-28), which reads the retraction of an optical system in response to a completion of an image sensing operation. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

Art Unit: 2615

invention was made to combine the apparatus of Saito in view of Kobayashi with the practice of retracting the optical system following the completion of an image capture taught by Takahashi to make an apparatus that retracts the lens after image capture has been completed, whether the camera is in an external control state or not. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to protect the lens when not in use.

Regarding claim 28, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus of claim 22. See above. Saito in view of Kobayashi do not teach a timer for causing the optical system to be retracted a predetermined time period after a completion of an image sensing operation when the apparatus is in the external control state. Takahashi teaches the retraction of a camera lens a predetermined time period after an image capture (col. 5, lines 23-28). The timer is inherently taught. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the apparatus of Saito in view of Kobayashi with the technique of Takahashi to make an image sensing apparatus with a timer that retracts the lens once a predetermined time period following an image capture has elapsed. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to protect the lens when not in use.

Regarding claim 29, Takahashi teaches the retraction of lens to a rest position after the elapse of a predetermined time period following the last image capture (col. 5, lines 23-28). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill that if another image is captured before the predetermined time period elapses, the timer resets in accordance with the most recent image captured, and the lens would remain in the extended position.

Art Unit: 2615

4. Claims 7-8, 12-14, 26, 30-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito et al, U.S. Patent 6,256,063, in view of Kobayashi et al, U.S. Patent 5,136,320, and further in view of Hashimoto et al, U.S. Patent 6,344,875.

Regarding claims 7 and 8, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus according to claim 1. See above. Kobayashi teaches that the image sensing optical system is positioned in a non image sensing region during a non image sensing state, which reads on the prevention of the optical system from being driven to the image sensing state (col. 16, lines 38-50). Saito teaches a digital camera with a memory for storing digital images (col. 9, lines 13-17). Saito in view of Kobayashi do not teach that the image sensing optical system is in the non image sensing region when the apparatus is in the external control state. Hashimoto teaches that when the camera is controlled by a computer, it is limited to transmitting and receiving images, which reads on non image sensing states (col. 10, lines 30-33). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the practice of positioning optical systems in the non image sensing position when the apparatus is in a non image sensing mode taught by Saito in view of Kobayashi with the use of non image external control states taught by Hashimoto to make an apparatus that positions the optical system in the non image sensing region when the camera is transmitting or receiving images in the external control state. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to safeguard the lens when it is not in use.

Regarding claim 12, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus according to claim 1. See above. Kobayashi teaches that the image sensing optical system is positioned in a non image sensing region during a non image sensing state (col. 16, lines 38-50). Saito in view of

Art Unit: 2615

Kobayashi do not teach a reproduction state. Hashimoto teaches a state in which to play images, which reads on the reproduction state (col. 10, lines 34-38). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the use of a non image sensing reproduction state taught by Hashimoto into the apparatus which stores the optical system during non imaging sensing states taught by Saito in view of Kobayashi to make an apparatus that positions the optical system in the non sensing image region during the reproduction state. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to safeguard the lens when it is not in use.

Regarding claim 13, Hashimoto teaches an operation device that selectively sets the apparatus into at least the external control and image states, wherein said operation device is provided on an exterior of said image sensing device, which reads on a position where a user can operate the operation device (Fig. 13B).

Regarding claim 14, Hashimoto teaches a signal processing device (digital signal processing circuit 11) that converts an optical image formed by the optical system into an electrical signal for photography (col. 6, lines 50-55).

Regarding claim 26, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus according to claim 20. See above. Kobayashi teaches that the image sensing optical system is positioned in a non image sensing region during a non image sensing state, which reads on the prevention of the optical system being driven in the extending direction (col. 16, lines 38-50). Saito in view of Kobayashi do not teach that the image sensing optical system is in the non image sensing region when the apparatus is in the external control state. Hashimoto teaches that when the camera is controlled by a computer, it is limited to transmitting and receiving images, which reads on non

Art Unit: 2615

image sensing states (col. 10, lines 30-33). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the practice of positioning optical systems in the non image sensing position when the apparatus is in a non image sensing mode taught by Saito in view of Kobayashi with the use of non image external control states taught by Hashimoto to make an apparatus that prevents the optical system from being driven in the extended direction when the camera is transmitting or receiving images in the non image sensing external control state. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to safeguard the lens when it is not in use.

Regarding claim 30, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus according to claim 20. See above. Kobayashi teaches that the image sensing optical system is positioned in a non image sensing region during a non image sensing state, which reads on the prevention of the optical system being driven from the extending direction (col. 16, lines 38-50). Saito in view of Kobayashi do not teach a reproduction state. Hashimoto teaches a state in which to play images, which reads on the reproduction state (col. 10, lines 34-38). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the use of a non image sensing reproduction state taught by Hashimoto into the apparatus which stores the optical system during non imaging sensing states taught by Saito in view of Kobayashi to make an apparatus that prevents the optical system from moving in the extending direction during the reproduction state. One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to safeguard the lens when it is not in use.

Art Unit: 2615

Regarding claim 31, Hashimoto teaches an operation device that selectively sets the apparatus into at least either one of the image sensing and external control states, said device being provided on an exterior of said image sensing device (Fig. 13B).

Regarding claim 32, Hashimoto teaches a signal processing device (digital signal processing circuit 11) that converts an optical image formed by the optical system into an electrical signal for photography (col. 6, lines 50-55).

5. Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito et al, U.S. Patent 6,256,063, in view of Kobayashi et al, U.S. Patent 5,136,320, and further in view of Prentice et al, U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0030729.

Regarding claim 9, Saito in view of Kobayashi teach the apparatus of claim 1. See above. Saito in view of Kobayashi do not teach that in the external control state, the image sensing optical system is driven to the image sensing region in response to the completion of an image sensing operation. Prentice et al teaches that the host computer 12 instructs the camera 10 when to take motion pictures [0024], and it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to drive the optical system to and within the image sensing region in response to a completion of an image sensing apparatus to effect focus for the next motion image to be captured. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the practice of enabling a computer to transmits motion image capturing commands to a camera taught by Prentice into the apparatus of Saito in view of Kobayashi to make an image sensing apparatus that can be controlled by an external device to capture motion images.

Art Unit: 2615

One of ordinary skill would have been motivated to make such a modification to enable a computer to control various imaging parameters in a camera.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dorothy Wu whose telephone number is 703-305-8412. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Andrew Christensen can be reached on 703-308-9644. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 2615

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Donna M. Wu

DW

March 9, 2004



ANDREW CHRISTENSEN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600